

Stranahan Stewardship Committee Meeting

March 16, 2015 Old School House Commons 6:30 pm.

Members Attending: Diana Batzel, Jim Brimblecombe, John Domey, Ed Jalbert, Jenny Warshow and guest Sarah Fowler.

Minutes from 2/17/15 were approved.

New Business: Guest Sarah Fowler wanted to know more about the usage of the Stranahan Forest, her questions arising from the recent questionnaire. She felt usage was becoming more narrow and restrictive. Her primary areas of concern were logging, horseback riding, and trapping.

Ed Jalbert took the lead in trying to explain the restrictions and slowness of the process involved in getting a log job completed. The factors included: work being done by volunteers, following stricter standards set forth by the Vermont Land Trust concerning wetlands sensitivity, understanding and marking those wetlands, boundary disputes, actual marking of the timber, signoffs by the Select Board and VLT, bid process, and more.

Next Sarah wanted to be more clear on the issue of horseback riding and driving. Trails present on the land at this time were cut to accommodate people and are not wide enough for horses. The Thompson Road would be able to handle horse traffic but is at times very wet. The Committee has never had a request to create any horse trails but would be open to one.

On the issue of trapping, according to the questionnaire, it is not allowed. Sarah stated that state law allows for trapping on all public lands. The Committee acknowledged that this was probably a mistake and proceeded to seek clarification. The actual wording regarding trapping was some what vague; the Committee thought that it actually was allowed but subject to permission by the Select Board. We have not had any requests for trapping but have had some concern surrounding the issue as some community members have voiced concern about the safety of their dogs. We could further clarify this issue if the need arises.

The Committee profusely thanks Sarah for attending a meeting to voice her interests and concerns. Though the questionnaire is not without it's issues it seems to have fulfilled it's intention to stimulate discussion and input from the community.

Also under new business, Jenny received a request from the biking community to do a presentation regarding the creation of new bike trails. This seemed to be a good demonstration to Sarah of how the committee works to address community requests. There was a brief discussion of how it might be beneficial for the bike group to present to the Conservation Commission, Select Board, and our committee all at once. This will take some arranging, Jenny will contact the bike club.

Discussion: In regard to other agenda items, Ed said that Chad Byers had put in a bid to log the designated stands and the Select Board had accepted it but no deposit has been received as of yet. Some discussion regarding boundary dispute.

Jenny passed out packets of the questionnaire results to each member. There was not much time left to discuss the results; each member should review and be ready to discuss at next meeting.

Steve Fiske has circulated more info on the bee meadow and is still trying to arrange a meeting.

Actions: Jenny will contact bike club. Each member should review questionnaire and be ready to discuss at next meeting.

Next meeting April 20,2015 @6:30pm Old School House Commons

Agenda: New business, minutes, logging update, bike trails, bee meadow, questionnaire results, management plan.

Approved: 4/20/15

Prepared by Diana Batzel